

divisions were put out of action. They lost 3,000 tanks, almost 2,000 armored vehicles, more than 2,000 artillery pieces. And over half a million Iraqi soldiers were captured, defeated, or disarmed. You were as good as advertised; you were, indeed, "Good to go."

This is a war we did not seek and did not want. But Saddam Hussein turned a deaf ear to the voices of peace and reason. And when he began burning Kuwait to the ground and intensifying the murder of its people, the coalition faced a moral imperative to put a stop to the atrocities in Kuwait once and for all. Boldly, bravely, you did just that. And when the rubber met the road, you did it in just 6 weeks and 100 decisive hours.

The evil Saddam has done can never be forgotten. But his power to attack his neighbors and threaten the peace of the region is today grievously reduced. He has been stripped of his capacity to project offensive military power. His regime is totally discredited, and as a threat to peace, the day of this dictator is over. And the bottom line is this: Kuwait's night of terror has ended.

Thomas Jefferson said that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. We must remain vigilant to make absolutely sure the Iraqi dictator is never, ever allowed to stoke the ashes of defeat into the burning embers of aggression. The sacrifice you've already made demands nothing less. The sacrifice of those who gave their lives will never be forgotten.

Saddam made many mistakes. But one of the biggest was to underestimate the determination of the American people and the daring of our troops. We saw in the desert what Americans have learned through 215 years of history about the difference between democracy and dictatorship. Soldiers

who fight for freedom are more committed than soldiers who fight because they are enslaved.

Americans today are confident of our country, confident of our future, and most of all, confident about you. We promised you'd be given the means to fight. We promised not to look over your shoulder. We promised this would not be another Vietnam. And we kept that promise. The specter of Vietnam has been buried forever in the desert sands of the Arabian Peninsula.

Today, the promise of spring is almost upon us, the promise of regrowth and renewal: renewed life in Kuwait, renewed prospects for real peace throughout the Middle East, and a renewed sense of pride and confidence here at home. And we are committed to seeing every American soldier and every allied POW home soon—home to the thanks and the respect and the love of a grateful nation and a very grateful President.

Yes, there remain vital and difficult tests ahead, both here and abroad, but nothing the American people can't handle. America has always accepted the challenge, paid the price, and passed the test. On this day, our spirits are high as our flag, and our future is as bright as Liberty's torch. Tomorrow we dedicate ourselves anew, as Americans always have and as Americans always will.

The first test of the new world order has been passed. The hard work of freedom awaits. Thank you. Congratulations. And God bless the United States of America.

*Note: The President recorded this address at 9:15 a.m., March 1, in his private study at the White House. In his address, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The address was broadcast at noon, March 2, over the Armed Forces Radio Network.*

## Remarks to Veterans Service Organizations

March 4, 1991

Thank you very much for that warm welcome. Looking at this array of speakers up here, I can't imagine there's anything left

for me to say, because I understand that you have had a briefing from Brent Scowcroft and Secretary Cheney and also, of

course, heard from our very able Secretary of the Veterans Administration, Ed Derwinski. What a tremendous job he's doing for our country and for our veterans. And I'm so proud to have him at my side.

I'm glad to see the familiar faces from so many of our veterans organizations—particularly the VFW and the Disabled American Veterans, the American Legion—many, many others. I'm going to get in real trouble now for—[laughter]—omitting some. But welcome, again; welcome back to the White House.

Let me just begin by giving credit where credit is due. From the day that Saddam Hussein first invaded Kuwait, America's veterans stood rock-solid, rock-solid behind our troops. You understood from the very beginning what was at stake: the rule of law and the cause of freedom. You understand that when the forces of aggression arise, America must stand ready to do the hard work of freedom.

You understood because you've been there. And you know how important the support of the folks back home is to our troops. Our brave men and women, as you have heard, are coming home soon, home to the respect and the gratitude of the American people. And let me tell you—they have sure earned it.

I am pleased to say—and you've seen it all in this age of instant television communication—that we're making progress in our journey from war to peace. The cessation of combat operations that went into effect midnight Wednesday is, as you've heard from Dick Cheney, holding—for the most part, it is holding. General Schwarzkopf has reported, and then the Secretary called me yesterday morning about this, that Sunday's desert meeting with the Iraqi commanders really made great progress.

I liked it—what General Schwarzkopf said on the television when he said, "Look, we're not here to humiliate anybody." And then he went ahead and laid down the rules that should be fulfilled. And it looks like he made great, great progress on that.

Already 10 coalition POW's, including several Americans, are on their way back home. But I'll tell you, I don't think any of us, particularly in this audience—and I know I speak for the three up here behind

me on this stage—can relax at all until every single one of those prisoners is home and every single missing is accounted for to the best of the ability of the Iraqi forces, and also that the Kuwaiti detainees are returned—every single one of them. And that's our goal.

And clearly, on a sad subject, that requires the returning of the remains of all our fallen heroes.

We've received information on the location of the mine fields in and around the theater of operations so that the rebuilding of Kuwait can begin safely. And it's my understanding, Dick, that—you told me that he got immediate satisfaction on that question of the mine fields. So, that's good; that shows some real signs of progress and cooperation.

Our goal remains what it's been all along: Iraq's complete and unconditional compliance with all relevant United Nations resolutions and its implementation of all the requirements to be found in Security Council Resolution 686, passed overwhelmingly late Saturday afternoon, just this past Saturday. This would allow us to move beyond the current suspension of military operations to a more permanent and stable cease-fire.

Now, this has been a triumph for the 28 nations united against aggression. But as I said in my address to the Nation the final night of Kuwait's liberation, this is not a time to gloat or it's not a time to brag. It's a time to be proud, fiercely proud—proud of our troops, proud of our friends who stood with us, and proud of our people. Their strength and perseverance endured that our success was as certain as our cause was true.

We're here today to ensure that our nation always remembers those who defended her, the heroic men and women who stood where duty required them to stand. And we owe it to our veterans that they return to an America confident and full of promise. Much work remains to be done on the domestic scene. We've got to tackle that with a new determination. But the American people, I am convinced, are up to the job, as they have always been.

Let me close with the words of Abraham Lincoln, who spoke to the Nation on this

very day, but back in 1865, at the end of a devastating civil war. Here was the quote—most remember part of it: “With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”

Those words are inscribed on the marble of the memorial which bears Lincoln’s name. They were from the President’s second inaugural. They were a fitting call to honor the Nation’s veterans.

I made a comment right here at this podium the other day about shedding the divisions that incurred from the Vietnam war. And I want to repeat and say especially to the Vietnam veterans that are here—and I just had the pleasure of meeting some in the hall—it’s long overdue. It is long overdue that we kicked the Vietnam syndrome, because many veterans from that conflict came back and did not receive the proper acclaim that they deserve—that this nation was divided and we weren’t as grateful as we should be. So somehow, when these troops come home, I hope that message goes out to those that served this country in the Vietnam war that we appreciate their service as well.

I am very grateful to our Secretary of Defense, to the commander of our—to the Chairman of our Joint Chiefs, and to our CINC in the field, General Schwarzkopf, and to each and every one of them—I expect, knowing some of you, that you took the same pride I did in one of our GI’s when these Iraqis came tearing out to sur-

render. And they had fear written all over their faces because they’d been told that this would be their end. And I thought there was something very moving and touching when that American sergeant said, “We’re not going to hurt you. We’re not going to hurt you.”

And we are a generous nation. And we’ve got a lot to do now; we’ve got a lot to do to heal the wounds. Our argument has never been with the people of Iraq, with those hapless soldiers that were sent to a fate that they didn’t even know what was in store for them. Our argument has been with Saddam Hussein. Our argument has been with a dictator who created aggression against a neighbor.

And so, as we rejoice in our victory, I think we can also rejoice in the fact that we are a humble nation—that we have pride, of course, in what took place, but we are not gloating. We are not trying to rub it in. What we stood for was a principle. And now we’ve got to stand for doing what’s right by our veterans, and we’ve got to stand for doing what’s right by those countries whose freedom we saved around the world.

Thank you all for your fantastic support. Isn’t it great to be an American in these wonderful times?

*Note: The President spoke at 1:48 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney; Secretary of Veterans Affairs Edward J. Derwinski; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf; and Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.*

## Nomination of Donald J. Yockey To Be Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition

March 4, 1991

The President today announced his intention to nominate Donald Jay Yockey, of California, to be Under Secretary of De-

fense for Acquisition at the Department of